

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for vending a plurality of articles, comprising:
an enclosure having closed sides and a hollow interior, said enclosure having a
5 door opening formed in one of said sides;
a rotator assembly rotatably mounted in said hollow interior of said frame, said
rotator assembly having a plurality of angularly spaced storage locations
each for releasably retaining an article to be vended;
a door member hingedly attached to said frame and operable to be moved
10 between a closed position blocking said door opening and an open
position permitting access to said rotator assembly through said door
opening; and
an indexing assembly connected to said door member and to said rotator
assembly, said indexing assembly being operable to rotate said rotator
15 assembly to move one of said storage locations away from said door
opening and move another one of said storage locations to said door
opening to access an article at said another one of said storage locations
through said door opening when said door member is moved from the
closed position to the open position.
20
2. The apparatus according to claim 1 including a locking mechanism attached
to said door member and said enclosure and being operable to lock and unlock said door
member.
- 25 3. The apparatus according to claim 2 wherein said locking mechanism is token-
operated.
4. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said rotator assembly includes at
least two article supporting trays in a stacked relationship, each of said trays having a
30 predetermined number of said storage locations, said storage locations of one of said
trays being angularly displaced with respect to said storage locations of another one of
said trays.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said storage locations are each sized to retain a single standard-sized propane tank in an upright position.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein adjacent ones of said storage locations are separated by dividers.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said dividers each include a vertical beam adjacent a periphery of said rotator assembly and a horizontal beam extending from an upper portion of said vertical beam radially inwardly.

10

8. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said rotator assembly includes a stop mounted at each of said storage locations at a periphery of said rotator assembly.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said indexing assembly includes a first arm for enabling said rotator assembly to rotate and a second arm for rotating said rotator assembly.

10. The apparatus according to claim 9 wherein said rotator assembly has a plurality of apertures formed therein each corresponding to one of said storage locations and said indexing assembly includes a pin for selectively engaging said apertures to prevent rotation of said rotator assembly.

11. The apparatus according to claim 10 wherein said rotator assembly includes a lever arm mounting said pin, said lever arm being in a normal position with said pin engaging one of said apertures when said door member is in the closed position and said lever arm being moved by engagement with said first arm to a released position disengaging said pin from said one of said apertures.

12. The apparatus according to claim 9 wherein rotator assembly includes a plurality of projections, said second arm engaging one of said projections during an opening of said door member to rotate said rotator assembly.

13. An apparatus for vending a plurality of propane tanks, comprising:
an enclosure having closed sides and a hollow interior, said enclosure having a
door opening formed in one of said sides;
a rotator assembly rotatably mounted in said hollow interior of said frame, said
5 rotator assembly having at least two vertically stacked trays each having a
plurality of angularly spaced storage locations each for releasably
retaining a propane tank to be vended;
a door member hingedly attached to said frame and operable to be moved
between a closed position blocking said door opening and an open
10 position permitting access to said rotator assembly through said door
opening; and
an indexing assembly connected to said door member and to said rotator
assembly, said indexing assembly being operable to rotate said rotator
assembly to move one of said storage locations away from said door
15 opening and move another one of said storage locations to said door
opening to access one of the propane tanks at said another one of said
storage locations through said door opening when said door member is
moved from the closed position to the open position.
- 20 14. The apparatus according to claim 13 wherein said rotator assembly includes at
least two article supporting trays in a stacked relationship, each of said trays having a
predetermined number of said storage locations, said storage locations of one of said
trays being angularly displaced with respect to said storage locations of another one of
said trays.
- 25 15. The apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said storage locations are each
sized to retain a single standard-sized propane tank in an upright position.
16. The apparatus according to claim 14 wherein adjacent ones of said storage
30 locations are separated by dividers.

17. The apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said indexing assembly includes a first arm for enabling said rotator assembly to rotate and a second arm for rotating said rotator assembly.

5 18. The apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said rotator assembly has a plurality of apertures formed therein each corresponding to one of said storage locations and said indexing assembly includes a pin for selectively engaging said apertures to prevent rotation of said rotator assembly.

10 19. The apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said rotator assembly includes a lever arm mounting said pin, said lever arm being in a normal position with said pin engaging one of said apertures when said door member is in the closed position and said lever arm being moved by engagement with said first arm to a released position disengaging said pin from said one of said apertures.

15

20. The apparatus according to claim 17 wherein rotator assembly includes a plurality of projections, said second arm engaging one of said projections during an opening of said door member to rotate said rotator assembly.